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LINGUISTIC PREPARATION OF TEACHERS.

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS SHOULD HAVE TRAINING IN AUDIOLINGUAL COMPETENCIES, LINGUISTICS, COMPOSITION, CONVERSATION, CIVILIZATION, AND CULTURE. ONLY THOSE WHO TEACH ADVANCED COURSES NEED A STRONG BACKGROUND IN LITERATURE AND STYLE, BUT TEACHERS AT ALL LEVELS, AND ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO INSTRUCT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS, NEED TRAINING IN ARTICULATORY PHONETICS, PHONEMICS, MORPHEMICS, AND SYNTAX. AN UNDERSTANDING OF LINGUISTIC PRINCIPLES WILL ENABLE TEACHERS TO HANDLE LEARNING PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE INTERFERENCE OF THE NATIVE LANGUAGE. BECAUSE MANY TEACHERS WHO HAVE HAD SEVERAL LITERATURE COURSES CLAIM THAT THESE HAVE NOT PROVIDED THEM WITH THE PRACTICAL SKILLS THEY NEED IN TEACHING, MORE TRAINING IN TEACHING THESE BASIC SKILLS IS NEEDED IN UNIVERSITIES AND WORKSHOPS. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN THE "ILLINOIS JOURNAL OF EDUCATION," VOLUME 57, NUMBER 6, OCTOBER 1966. (AS)

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LINGUISTIC PREPARATION OF TEACHERS

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During the two years that it has been my pleasure to serve the schools of Illinois as a foreign language supervisor, I have observed that the more elementary the instruction is in modern foreign languages, the more necessary an understanding of linguistics becomes for the teacher. It is neither necessary nor desirable that the foreign language teacher explain linguistic terminology to students. It is both necessary and desirable that the foreign language teacher have an understanding of linguistic principles in order to prevent conflicts arising between the similarities and contrasts of the native language and the language to be learned.

An ideal foreign language teacher should possess three general and complex talents: that of a teacher, that of a native speaker, and that of a linguist.[1] In this article, I cannot describe the experiences and preparation that constitute the make-up of a good teacher, but the minimum requirements are regulated by the certification office of the state in which the teacher is employed. The accident of birth creates a native speaker, but the dedicated foreign language teacher, through practice, study, and travel can attain near-native pronunciation, or can employ teaching materials and equipment that will compensate for any inadequacies in pronunciation. Regarding the third talent, the teacher does not have to be a professional linguist. He should, however, have "a background in general linguistics, specifically in articulatory phonetics, the study of sounds in human speech; in phonemics, the study of distinctive sound features within a language; in morphemics, the study of units of meaning; and in syntax, the study of the arrangement of these units."[2]

Teachers who instruct elementary pupils in modern foreign languages need to be very fluent, but they may have a limited or restricted preparation in the literature of the language taught. It is far more important for them to have course work in linguistics, conversation, and composition. The preparation of junior high school teachers, should differ only if they instruct pupils who are at the intermediate level. Senior high school teachers need to have a strong background in the literature only if they teach advanced level foreign language students. Some colleges and universities are now initiating courses in culture and civilization, or professional preparation, that will do more to prepare teachers to offer appropriate instruction to students at the beginning level of foreign language study tha. an accumulation of literature courses. Many teachers have indicated that they enjoyed the literature courses in which they were enrolled, but have confessed that these courses have not provided them with the practical skills which they need to ac-

[1] Desberg, Dan, "Structural Linguistics and High-School Language Teaching," *The Classical Outlook,* Vol. XXXVII, Nov. 1959.
[2] Ibid.

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complish the teaching tasks that confront them daily. It is not my contention that linguistics is a panacea that will solve all the problems of foreign language teaching, but utilization of some basic linguistic principles makes language teaching and learning easier. The curriculum has become so crowded that school administrators find difficulty in scheduling a well-articulated, long-sequential, foreign language program, continuous through grade twelve, even though they know that it is imperative to do so. The requisites for a teacher-trainee make it almost impossible to train a teacher in four years or 120 semester hours of college credit. The teacher candidate wishing to qualify for certification as an elementary teacher as well as a foreign language specialist, finds that he cannot do so unless he has advanced placement in language as an incoming freshman. The study of an additional language is impossible without carryig a heavy course load and eventually accumulating more than 120 semester hours of college credit.

In the future, college and university advisors may be able to place teacher-trainees in the courses that will prepare them for the work they will be hired to do. Until that time, teachers will continue to go back to summer school and take State-sponsored workshops in order to fill in the courses that have real practical value and relate to their instructional tasks. Deans of some schools of education have even suggested that perhaps it will be necessary to make teacher-training a five year curriculum.

The busy foreign language teacher can rely on the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to continue to offer in-service teacher-training workshops to compensate for any deficiency that exists. He has but to notify his superintendent and the county superintendent of schools of the need for such a workshop; and they in turn will work with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in arranging the workshop.

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